LOADSTAR LETTER #23

June 1995 Companion newsletter for LOADSTAR #133

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Escom Pays $10Mil For Commodore Assets

HEPPENHEIM, GERMANY, 1995 APR 25 (NB) -- Escom, which now claims to be Europe's largest wholesale PC vendor and distributor, has announced the acquisition of the remains of the Commodore empire.

Although officially not commenting on the actual purchase price, sources close to Escom are reporting that the company paid around $10 million for the rights to the Amiga range of computers, as well as a whole raft of patents relating to Commodore's PC technology.

According to Escom, the precise terms of the acquisition deal are currently being thrashed out with the liquidators of the Commodore empire in the US. The preliminary terms of the deal include Escom acquiring all of the rights to Commodore's range of personal computers, including the VIC, Max, and C-16/64 series, plus all the Amiga computers and their variants.

Escom officials say that they hope to continue selling most of the Amiga range of machines, as well as the elderly C-64 series, on a global basis. Sales of the C-64, Newsbytes notes, are continuing to be brisk in the East European market.

Although production of the C-64 range of home computers ceased last spring, Commodore was known to have stocks of the eight-bit computer, whose design dates back to the mid-1980s, which were being sold into Eastern Europe, where a boom market for C-64 peripherals has been created. Escom has said that it plans to look at resuming production of the C-64, "if at all feasible."

Escom, meanwhile, remains vague on its plans for the Amiga. Earlier this week, some sources were reported as saying that the company intends to develop and market an Amiga-based add-in board that could be used as a multimedia module for high-end PCs.

Press reports from German quote Escom officials as saying that production of the Amiga 600, as well as the 1200 and 4000 series, will also restart.

Production of these machines was frozen as soon as the company was placed into receivership last year.

Escom has also said it plans to promote the Amiga into markets the machine has not been seen in before. The German PC vendor is in active discussions with the Tianjin group of China, a multimedia specialist distributor, with a view to selling the machine into the booming Chinese computer market. (Sylvia Dennis & Steve Gold/19950425/Press & Reader Contact: Escom, tel +49-6252-7090, fax +49-6252-709-442)

Germany - Escom Rounds Out Commodore Acquisition

HEPPENHEIM, GERMANY, 1995 MAY 12 (NB) -- Escom, the Germany computer manufacturer and retail company, has announced that its acquisition of Commodore is now complete. Escom has acquired to title to the Commodore ranges of machines, spanning the Vic/Max/C-64 family right through to the Amiga range of machines.

Escom officials have confirmed they have "dotted the i's and crossed the t's" on the contract for the transfer of the assets and intellectual property of Commodore Electronics, as well as several subsidiaries, which include worldwide rights to the Commodore and Amiga trademarks and patents.

The acquisition was originally approved on April 21 by the US Bankruptcy Courts in New York, and has been confirmed as being effective from May 1 this year.

Escom officials have also revealed a little more about their plans for the Amiga, which include reviving the ongoing development of the Amiga set-top box, an

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Amiga-based module that Commodore originally planned would form the heart of a multimedia black box that plugs into a user's TV, offering a range of multimedia services over the phone line.

Escom had said previously it wanted to revive manufacture of the C-64 home computer for sale into Eastern Europe. Now the company has confirmed these plans, and has also affirmed its intention to revive manufacture of the complete range of Amiga computers for sale on a global basis.

Escom has also entered into a joint venture with Tianjin Family-Issued Multimedia (TFM) of China, details of which call for TFM to begin the production and distribution of Amiga computers in mainland China.

TFM is billed as the leader in Mainland China in the production of games and education machines based on 16-bit technology and has developed one of the largest distribution organizations in Mainland China.

As reported previously by Newsbytes, although production of the C-64 range of home computers ceased last spring, Commodore was known to have stocks of the eight-bit computer, whose design dates back to the mid-1980s, which were being sold into Eastern Europe, where a boom market for C-64 peripherals has been created.

(Sylvia Dennis & Steve Gold/19950425/Press & Reader Contact: Escom, tel +49-6252-7090, fax +49-6252-709-442)

Old Broken VCRs and 40-Col Monitors: A Perfect Marriage

JEFF JONES. A cold, unrelenting demon has disrupted my household. That demon is the Cartoon Network. My daughters absolutely must watch an endless succession of Hanna Barbera cartoons whenever they aren't doing homework or playing outdoors in the hot Louisiana sun. The trouble is that in the evening my wife and I have our own shows to watch. So she allows the children (against my wishes) to watch television in our bedroom. This has slowly transformed my beloved bedroom into a wasteland of candy wrappers, dirty dishes, and tiny toys that hurt when you step on them.

It was time for my daughters to have their own television. Unfortunately, my checkbook didn't agree. But our household has two dead cheap VCR in it's closets. They no longer play tapes. They mangle them. They were still excellent television tuners. Since they were cheap VCRs it would cost less to buy a new one than to fix them. Fortunately I couldn't bring myself to toss them out.

My household is also a graveyard for old Commodore monitors. I have a 1084, Franklin and 1701 composite monitor at my disposal. These monitors may not be cable-ready televisions, but connected to the video and audio output of any VCR, they make great television monitors. As early as 1987 I was connecting VCRs to my 1084 for an exceptional picture when my 25-inch floor model TV (donated by my father-in-law) coughed up its final stable pictures.

It's no real trick to think of your VCR as a computer. Like your computer, the VCR is a black box that feeds the television a picture. Forget the coaxial cable "out to TV" jack. What you need are two RCA plugs (regular push-type stereo cables) and the video out and audio out jacks from your VCR. The video out goes to the monitor's video plug. The audio out goes to the monitor's audio plug. note that 1701 monitors must take VCR output in the front since it's expecting separated video in the back, which most home VCRs don't supply. You'll have to flick the "signal selector" switch in the back of the 1701 to "front". Some older 1084 monitors actually have a VCR button on them. I don't know what it's for because I just hooked up my VCR like a C-64 and switched between my Amiga and VCR with the Amiga being on the 80-column screen and the VCR on the 40-column screen.

You can hook your C-64 to the VCR at if you can't spare the monitor. If your monitor has front and rear plugs, you can have the C-64 in at the back, and the VCR in at the front. To switch between the two, you'll have to press the front/back switch. Or you can use a composite (two plug) monitor cable and plug the video and audio into the VCR's video and audio in. You'll have to change the VCR's input to video. Some VCRs make you tune to channel 0 for that. Just read your VCR's instructions for monitoring or recording from a video camera. In this case your C-64 is the camera -- but only with composite video (the two prong monitor cable). If you use the game box, you'll have to use a coaxial cable adaptor and tune to channel 3 or 4.

Tooling Around On LOADSTAR's BBS

LOADSTAR's BBS has had 1600 calls since it's been online. Most people seem to go straight to the BBS. There they hunt for BBS numbers closer to home. You can get to our BBS database by typing BC at any LOADSTAR: prompt.

There are also fun places on the BBS. Online games and the sub boards can be found in the plus files section. You can get to the menu by typing PF at the LOADSTAR: prompt. Once in the plus file library, you see a menu. Note that the prompts are **bold**, and my commands are *italicized*.

LOADSTAR: ***PF***
Plus-File Library: Main
1: Great White Card Game
2: Power Poker
3: Network Wallwriter
4: Voting Booth
5: National Message Bases
6: Upload/Download Libraries

Options 1 and 2 are card games. You

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The Compleat Dave: Two 1581 disks or three 1541 disks crammed with sid music. Over 250 Songs, all of them classic melodies from yesteryear, arranged and transcribed by the Master of Music, Dave Marquis, and now they're available in one gigantic 8-hour collection. If you enjoy SID music, you owe it to yourself to get THE COMPLEAT DAVE. Two 1581 disks **#070523 Three 1541 disks #070525**

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USA

must have Commodore graphics enabled to play. THe games also cost you credits to play. In other words, you must earn credits, either by uploading files or engaging in conversation on the subboards (National Message Bases), in order to build the credit to play the games. Option 3 allows you to exchange witty "one-liners" with other warped individuals all over the nation. Option 4 is a place where you can vote on topics, computer related and not. A running percentage of response is kept. Option 5 takes you to the message bases -- the debate boards. The debate boards are divided into two major special interest groups: SIG 1 and SIG 2. I think SIG 2 is the most diverse and interesting.

Plus-files: *5*

```
##  SIG Name

 1  National Message Areas #1
 2  National Message Areas #2
```

Which SIG? : *2*

Now we see all the available categories:

```
Available Boards:

 1+>Std  MCI Graphics
 2+>Std  Debate Room
 3+>Std  Humor
 4+>Std  Kitchen
 5+>Std  Ham Radio
 6+>Std  Beek Makers Heaven
 7+>Std  Electronic Gaming
 8+>Std  Hobbies
 9+>Std  The Big Screen
10+>Std  Science Fiction
11+>Std  Sports
12+>Std  Beyond Reality
13+>Std  Astronomy
14+>Std  Religious
15+>Std  Tarr's Rock Cafe
16+>Std  Comic Books
17+>Std  Poetry
18 >Std  Wrestling
19+>Std  Chess
20+>Std  Heavy Metal
21 >Std  Bicker Board
22+>Std  Trivia
23+>Std  News USA
24+>Std  Short Stories
25+>Std  Macintosh
26+>Std  IBM
```

Which Sub?: *10*

```
Sub Board #10: Science Fiction
 - This is a Network Sub.

Scanning for New Messages:  20

 - 20 Bulletins Total
 - 66 Responses Total

 -  8:58 PM - 96 Min. Left

National Message Areas #2 SIG
```

Sub#10: Science Fiction: *S*

Here I use the *S* command to show all the posts under this topic:

```
 #  Rsp       Title
------------------------------------
 1 [000]  ---  "DOCTOR WHO NEWS"
 2 [008]  ---  "No New  Activity?"
 3 [001]  ---  "STAR WARS"
 4 [002]  ---  "Star Trek Voyager"
 5 [000]  ---  "trivia"
 6 [000]  ---  "ST Voyager"
 7 [001]  ---  "VOYAGER"
 8 [006]  ---  "Trip"
 9 [006]  ---  "Dilithium?"
10 [005]  ---  "Earth 2"
11 [008]  ---  "Star Trek: Voyager"
12 [004]  ---  "vulcans"
13 [001]  ---  "GOOD BOOKS...."
14 [008]  ---  "Sliders"
15 [008]  ---  "I want HARD Sci-Fi"
16 [000]  ---  "Monster Horror Theater"
17 [001]  ---  "Magic game: Books"
18 [003]  ---  "VR_5"
19 [003]  ---  "I agree...."
20 [001]  ---  "Beam Me Up"

 -  8:59 PM - 95 Min. Left

National Message Areas #2 SIG
```

Sub#10: Science Fiction: *R3*

I choose to read topic #3. I have no idea why the poster's message is in all caps, but it's common among new 8-bit BBSers.

```
 3 [001]  ---  "STAR WARS"
   By: GUYVER @ MHG
   On: Wed Feb 15, 1995  6:20 AM
   LR: Wed Mar  1, 1995  1:53 PM
   -- 1 Response --

HAS ANYONE HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT
THE NEW STAR WARS MOVIE??? I
HEARD A RUMOR THAT IT WOULD TAKE
PLACE BEFORE THE OTHER STAR WARS
```

MOVIES.

I HOPE THAT IS TRUE CUZ I WANT TO SEE THE STORY BEHIND THE CLONE WARS. I HAVE ALWAYS LIKED READING THE BOOKS ABOUT THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE STAR WARS GROUP BUT I ALWAYS HEAR THINGS ABOUT THE CLONE WARS BUT NOTHING MUCH AT ALL.

Next Resp <Y/n>? *Y*

-Response #1 of 1-
By JOE COMMODORE @ SLR
On Wed Mar 1, 1995 1:53 PM

Subtopic: Prequel Series

Posted: Tue Feb 28, 1995 6:20 PM

Yep, they are being made! Expected release of the first one is 1997. It will be a prequel to the star wars saga...
If you haven't got your Star Wars trilogy videos now, better buy them, CBS/Fox has put a moratorium on them (probably in anticipation of a re-release to theatres...)

Word is that along with the movie crews working on this series are the multi-media crews prepping the visuals and sounds for upcoming games to be released along with the films..

Joe Commodore

Origin: Silicon Realms BBS Node 24 San /[ndreas, CA SLR

This response came from California, to a BBS that's networked with LOADSTAR's. Next I will respond to the post:

End Of Bulletin. Command?: *R*

Add A Response To This Bulletin:

Enter The Title Of Your Response:

Title: *Video Production*

File This Anonymously? *No*

* IMAGE BBS Editor *
Enter Your Text.

Commands:
.A (Abort)
.S (Done)
.H (Help)

Total Lines:
Available : 72
In Memory : 0
Remaining : 72

When I heard that Lucas wanted to use video technology instead of film, I was filled with trepidation. After all, who prefers video to film? I had images of raster lines on the big screen.

Now that I've seen films like Jurassic Park and The Mask, I'm filled with anticipation instead of portent.

Hard to believe that a movie like Tron was made a little more than 10 years and video technology as well as sound technology have come forward so much that when I hear that computers played heavily in

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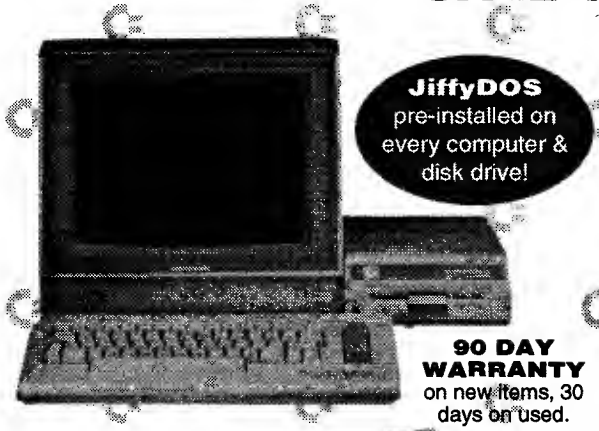

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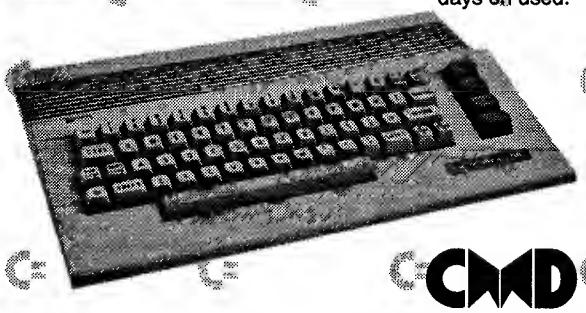

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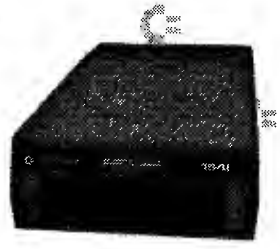
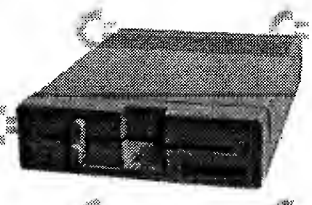
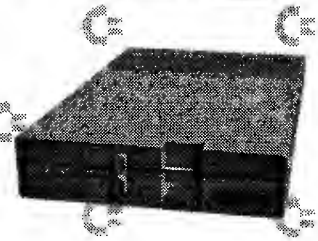






Prices do not include shipping charges, and are subject to change without notice. All items subject to availability, call before ordering.

Creative Micro Designs, Inc.

production, I actually have greater expectations.

...Jeff Jones
Command: *Save Text*

To save letters and posts on the BBS, just type a period as the first character on a line, then type S.

20 Lines Used.

Your Response Earned 50 Credits,
You Now Have 4003 Total!

- Filing Response...

End Of Bulletin. Command?: *Q*

- 9:21 PM - 73 Min. Left

National Message Areas #2 SIG

Sub#10: Science Fiction: *Q*

- 9:21 PM - 73 Min. Left

LOADSTAR: *PF*

Plus-File Library: Main

1: Great White Card Game
2: Power Poker
3: Network Wallwriter
4: Voting Booth
5: National Message Bases
6: Upload/Download Libraries

Plus-files: *3*

Read !!!WallWriter?: *Yes*

!!!WallWriter
v1.2/1.3

Scanning For New Writings...

New Writings:

Confucius say: If you find you understand women, you must be one, dollface.
JEFF JONES

I was the last person to do a wall writing. Because I had already read about ten wall writings before I posted that one, no previous wall writings showed. I might ad now that women can't understand men either.

Add Your Words Of Wisdom? *Yes*

Go Ahead And Write
:I'm still waiting on Congress to blow up. They talk tons of fertilizer there.

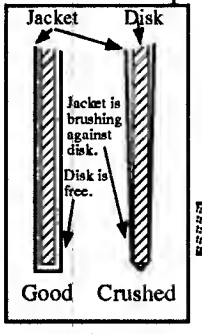
Usually I check the religion, news and debate board before I leave, but there's no space to show you what you'll find there. So dial up and join us. If you need tech support at any hour, dial the BBS and leave me a note. My handle is JEFF JONES.

Please don't forget that if you don't live in the Shreveport area, this is a long distance call. If you are under 18, please get your parent's permission before calling. It is about twice as cheap to call weekends, holidays or any day after 5:00 pm and before 8:00 am. Calling during business hours will cost you dearly. Your first minute usually costs twice as much as subsequent minutes so if you're having trouble logging on, and are calling again and again and again and again, each call can cost you $0.20 to $0.80 cents on the first minute.

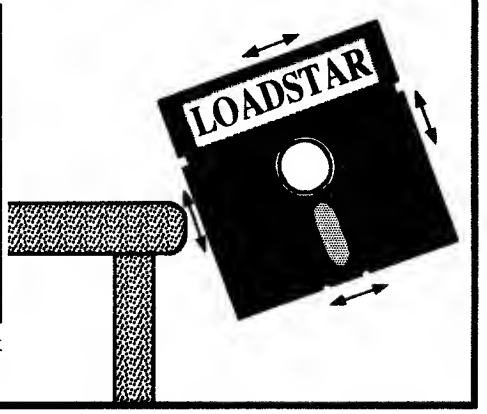
You might want to type *BB* and check the BBS database for networked BBSs closer to you. Any post you make there will get to the LOADSTAR BBS. You can Email ne with netmail. If the closer BBS is still a toll call, you might as well call the LOADSTAR BBS. Under many calling plans, long distance is long distance, no matter how far away you call.

DISK TROUBLE?

Every copy of LOADSTAR leaves Softdisk as a verified okay disk set. 3.5-inch disks are virtually trouble-free because they are difficult to damage, even when mishandled. Unfortunately some 5.25-inch disks may become crushed in the mail and give READ ERRORS because they have trouble spinning. Fixing these crushed disks is quite easy. Just run the areas indicated along a hard edge such as a table. This should uncrimp the disk.



Cross-section of disk



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(Specify computer seriel number and drive model)

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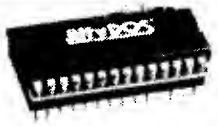

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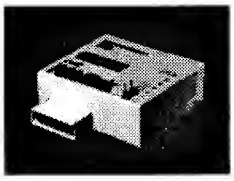
Increase Speed Up to 1500% while retaining 100% compatibility

- Speeds up Loading, Saving, Verifying, Formatting and Reading/Writing of Program, Sequential, User and Relative files unlike cartridges which only speed up Loading and Saving of PRG files
- Built-in DOS Wedge plus 17 additional features including file copier, text dump, printer toggle, and redefinable function keys make using your computer easier and more convenient
- ROM upgrade installs easily into most computers and disk drives. Supports C-64, 64C, SX-64, C-128, 128-D, 1541, 1541C, 1541-II,1571, 1581 and more.

FD Series

3.2 and 1.6 MB 3.5" Floppy Drives

The FD-2000 and FD-4000 disk drives utilize today's latest 3.5 inch disk drive technology. FD-2000's support 800K (1581 style) and 1.6 MB (High Density) formats, while the FD-4000 also offers support for the 3.2 MB (Enhanced Density) disk format. Fast and reliable, they support 1541, 1571 and 1581 style partitions, Native Mode partitioning and can actually read and write 1581 disks. FD's feature built-in JiffyDOS, SWAP button and optional Real Time Clock. High capacity, speed and compatibility make the FD right for every application, including GEOS.

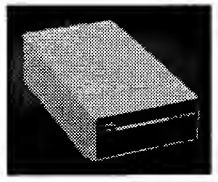


RAMLink

Power-Backed Expandable REU

The fastest possible form of storage, RAMLink provides instant access to files and retains data while your computer is turned off. Easy to use and expandable up to 16 MB, RAMLink utilizes the same powerful operating system found in CMD Hard Drives. Unlike Commodore REU's which are compatible with less than 1% of commercial software, RAMLink supports more than 80% of the commercial titles. RAMLink also offers built-in JiffyDOS Kernal, SWAP feature, reset button, enable/disable switch, pass-thru port and RAM port for REU/GEORAM use. RAMLink offers maximum speed, expandability and compatibility with all types of software and hardware including GEOS.

HD Series



SCSI Hard Drive for the C-64/128

HD Series Hard Drives are available in capacities up to 1 GB, are fully partitionable, and can emulate 1541, 1571, & 1581 disks while Native partitions utilize MSDOS-style subdirectories. HD's connect easily to the serial bus or parallel via RAMLink. Includes built-in JiffyDOS, SWAP feature and RTC. HD's offer superior compatibility with most commercial software including BBS, Productivity and GEOS. And with new pricing, HD Series drives offer the lowest cost per megabyte of any C64/128 storage device.

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